Stewardship & Consecration

Study guide Overview

Before going into detail as to what the Law of Consecration entails we will be looking at the outlook and attitudes (or 'philosophy') that are part of living it successfully.

We will begin with questions that you are encouraged to study personally, followed by quotes that substantiate the points being made (for your personal reference).

Major Questions

- Who does everything belong to?
- Who do we owe everything to?
- What should all our efforts go towards?
- How should we serve others?

Study Suggestions

•Print out this study guide
•Begin your study with prayer, praying for God to reveal the truth to you through His Spirit.
•Consider any questions, looking up any references for yourself.
•Find answers within the scriptures, the teachings of Joseph Smith, the Journal of Discourses etc. (Discussing them with your spouse or a close friend if possible)
•Be conscious of the Spirit throughout your studies, and close with prayer.
•Make a list of any additional questions you might have (to share with the Seventy who gave you this guide.)

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Note: Some passages may have been summarized for brevity. We encourage the reader to read the passages in full to be sure of their content and context.

The Philosophy of Stewardship & Consecration

Stewardship Questions

1. Who does everything belong to?

Leviticus 25:23 / John 1:3 / D&C 104:55

b) Is everything we have His or ours?

Psalms 24:1 / Romans 11:36 / Colossians 1:16-17

c) Do we belong to Him? Are we our own or His?

Jeremiah 10:23 / John 17:9 / Romans 14:7-8 / 1 Corinthians 6:19 / 1 John 4:4-6

2. Who do we owe everything to?
(Our time, talents, ourselves, and our earthly goods and riches)

Luke 14:33 / Romans 12:1 / 2 Corinthians 5:15 / Mosiah 2:24;4:19

3. Are we accountable for what we do with what we have?

Luke 16:2 / Romans 2:6 / 2 Corinthians 5:10 / D&C 70:4
(also see Alma 12:14; Luke 12:48)

Consecration Questions

4. What should our labors and efforts go towards?

Luke 16:13 / 1 Corinthians 10:24 / 2 Nephi 26:31 / D&C 24:7 / D&C 105:5

b) But see D&C 38:40 / D&C 42:42 / D&C 56:17

5. In serving and giving to others who are we ultimately serving and giving to?

Proverbs 19:17 / Matthew 25:34-40 / Mosiah 2:17 / D&C 42:30-31

b) see Acts 20:35 / 2 Corinthians 8:14 / Mosiah 4:21,26 / D&C 88:123

6. What should our relationship with others be?

John 17:11 / Romans 12:5 / Galatians 5:14 / 2 Nephi 1:21 / Mosiah 18:21 / D&C 38:24,27 / D&C 51:9 / Moses 7:18

Conclusions

The Philosophy of Stewardship & Consecration

1. Everything belongs to God

"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." *(Leviticus 25:23)*

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." *(John 1:3)*

"Behold, all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain, and ye are found hypocrites, and the covenants which ye have made unto me are broken;" *(D&C 104:55)*

b) Everything we have is His

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." *(Psalms 24:1)*

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." *(Romans 11:36)*

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" *(Colossians 1:16-17)*

c) Even we belong to Him - we are His

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." *(Jeremiah 10:23)*

"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." *(John 17:9)*

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." *(Romans 14:7-8)*

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? *(1 Corinthians 6:19)*

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." *(1 John 4:4-6)*

2. We owe everything to God *(Our time, talents, ourselves, and our earthly goods and riches)*

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." *(Luke 14:33)*

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." *(Romans 12:1)*

"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." *(2 Corinthians 5:15)*

"And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?" *(Mosiah 2:24;4:19)*

3. We accountable for what we do with what we have?

"And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; ..." *(Luke 16:2)*

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds:" *(Romans 2:6)*

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." *(2 Corinthians 5:10)*

"And an account of this stewardship will I require of them in the day of judgment." *(D&C 70:4, see Alma 12:14)*

"... For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." *(Luke 12:48)*

4. Our labors and efforts should go towards building up God's kingdom

"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." *(Luke 16:13)*

"Let no man seek his wealth, but every man another's wealth." *(1 Corinthians 10:24, JST = "good")*

"But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish." *(2 Nephi 26:31)*

"For thou shalt devote all thy service in Zion; and in this thou shalt have strength." *(D&C 24:7)*

"And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom;

otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself." *(D&C 105:5)*

b) The need for honest labor

"And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a commandment, that every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, go to with his might, with the labor of his hands, to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded." *(D&C 38:40)*

"Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer." *(D&C 42:42)*

"Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands!" *(D&C 56:17)*

5. In serving and giving to others who are we ultimately serving and giving to God

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." *(Proverbs 19:17)*

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?
38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?
39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." *(Matthew 25:34-40)*

"And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." *(Mosiah 2:17, see v. 18)*

"And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.
And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me; ..." *(D&C 42:30-31)*

b) Giving honestly and generously

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." *(Acts 20:35)*

"But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." *(2 Corinthians 8:14)*

"And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another.

And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants." *(Mosiah 4:21,26)*

"See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires." *(D&C 88:123)*

6. Our relationship with others be one of unity

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." *(John 17:11)*

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." *(Romans 12:5)*

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." *(Galatians 5:14)*

"... be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things, that ye may not come down into captivity;" *(2 Nephi 1:21)*

"And he commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another." *(Mosiah 18:21)*

"And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine." *(D&C 38:24,27)*

"And let every man deal honestly, and be alike among this people, and receive alike, that ye may be one, even as I have commanded you." *(D&C 51:9, see D&C 105:4)*

"And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them." *(Moses 7:18)*

Reflections

Think over or discuss -

How do these principles apply to the attitudes described below?

1) It is mine & I deserve / earned this

2) He doesn't deserve that & doesn't work hard enough

3) The world can offer me what I want / give me all I need

Overview

Godly	**Attitudes**	**UnGodly**
It is God's	Selfless / Selfish	It is mine
God meets my needs	God centered / Self-centered	I deserve this
I am happy for them	Forgiving / Envious	He doesn't deserve that
I cannot judge another	Unbaised / Critical	He doesn't work enough

Read the story on the next few pages with these ideas in mind

Consecration – A Law We Can Live
A Parable

A man awoke one morning hearing the words of a dream, and when he wrote them down he discovered that they were the words that the chronicler of the Book of Mormon might have written, had he lived in our time, setting down a record of our dealings with each other and with the Lord:

And it came to pass in the latter days that most of the believers in the promised land had set their hearts upon the things of the world.

2. They labored all day and into the night, both men and women, to earn money to buy the things the world called good, or to rise to a position of great honor in the world.

3. But the money they earned was never enough, and the things they bought did not make them happy, and the offices and honors they won were never secure;

4. Even when they had earned great wealth, the world persuaded them that they needed more.

5. And even when they had achieved high offices and great honors, their ambition was unsatisfied,

6. For they had forgotten that the rewards of the world come from Satan, and so have no substance.

7. To win the rewards of the world, they sacrificed the time they should have spent teaching their children.

8. They thrust their little ones out of their home into the care of strangers, in order to earn enough money to buy a grand house.

9. And when they had their grand house, the world said, They must be great people to have such a house!

10. But their children were strangers in their new home; they knew neither their father nor their mother, and often left the place, as a traveler leaves an unfriendly inn without a backward glance.

11. And again, they showered their children with presents: they gave them fine clothing, and let them ride through the streets in splendid vehicles.

12. And taught them to despise those whose clothing was plain, and mock those who rode in old cars, and jeer at those who had to walk because they had no car at all.

13. Thus they taught their children to persecute the poor, and to set their hearts upon the pleasures of the world.

14. And yet when these children took expensive poisons of ecstasy, and broke the laws of chastity, and cast aside other laws of God as things of no worth,

15. Their parents blamed the church for failing them, or the school for corrupting their values.

16. They did not see that their children had learned the main lesson of their parents' lives:

17. That any sacrifice is acceptable in order to win the rewards of the world,

18. Even the sacrifice of their own children.

19. These Saints who served the world more than the Lord gathered themselves in neighborhoods of costly houses, high on the hill so that all could see their splendor.

20. Thus they formed congregations of the rich, for the poor could not afford to live among them; this was an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

21. They paid their tithes and offerings and called themselves righteous,

22. Yet they forbade their children to befriend the children of men and women who labored with their hands, who earned little money, or who were despised by the world.

23. And when they remembered the poor – those who lived in small houses, with many children sleeping in each room – they said to themselves,

24. If only these people had not sinned, the Lord would have blessed them as we have been blessed;

25. Or, If only these people had learned to restrain themselves, they would not have so many children and so they would not be so poor;

26. Or, If only these people had educated themselves, they would be wise enough to live better than this, as we are;

27. Or, If only these people would work harder, they would not have to live in such poverty.

28. And many of the poor, hearing these things, believed them, and despised themselves even more than the rich despised them, and all their dreams and longings were for the rewards of the world, and they turned away their hearts from righteousness.

29. Thus the world had led away the believers to the worship of Mammon; yet the believers imagined themselves to be righteous because they attended their meetings and paid their tithes.

30. And the Lord looked upon them and said, Where is the people who will be ready to receive me at my coming?

31. Where is the people who are good to the needy,

32. Who honor men and women for their works and not for their possessions,

33. For their wisdom and not their worldly education,

34. For their righteousness and not their vain display?

35. Yea, the Lord looked out upon his church and said, Where is Zion?

36. Have I not given them prophets and teachers, doctrine and covenants?

37. Why then do they seek the honors of the world?

38. Why then do they steal from the poor, and then say that the Lord has blessed them?

39. For all things belong to me, saith the Lord, and all who labor righteously, with all their might, are worthy of an equal share of the bounty of the land;

40. Therefore any man who takes more than he needs, and does not give his surplus to the bishop to share it with the poor, has taken that which I have not given him;

41. Verily, verily, saith the Lord unto that man, you will have what you have stolen for a little season, but you will have no joy in it,

42. And at the last day you will stand with those who have no reward, because you did not share with the humblest of my brethren, and so you have no part in their inheritance.

43. The wicked world has nothing of itself, so whatever the world bestows is stolen property.

44. If the world gives you much, then you must give away much,

45. For that which you keep will be lost, and only as much as you give away can you keep forever.

46. What is Zion? said the Lord, Yea, where is the people ready to receive me at my coming?

And when the man had written down the words of his dream, he trembled in fear, for he knew that he was guilty. He said to his wife, “If the Lord sent an angel to gather the people of Zion, would he come to us, here in our fine house, with all our possessions? I fear that our house is a fortress we have built to keep the Lord out of our lives.”

To his surprise, his wife suddenly wept. “Oh, my husband!” she said, “I have had a dream every night for a week, but I was ashamed to tell you. In my dream we were about to buy a new Mercedes. We gave the money to the salesman, but when he handed us the keys to the car they burned our hands, and we couldn't hold them.

“So we took back the money and went to the bishop, and said, ‘We were going to buy a Mercedes, but the keys burn our hands. So instead we'll buy a cheaper car that is only as much as we need. Here's the rest of the money; because we were going to spend it on vanity, we know that it's more than we need. Therefore it's our surplus; give it to the poor and needy. Also, here is the title to our old car; give it to someone who needs it.’

“And in my dream the bishop said, ‘I was praying for help, because yesterday I saw the bishop of another ward weeping because his ward is very poor, and though his people work hard, they never have enough money to make ends meet. He told me that there was a worthy young woman in his ward who couldn't go to college because of her family's poverty. He told me that there were children in his ward whose parents could never take them to the doctor, because they had no money to pay. He told me of families with no table to eat on, of children with no books to read, of single mothers who were bowed down with weariness and grief because they worked all day to feed their children and had no time to teach them righteousness. And I told that bishop, It can't be right for your people to have so little, and my people to have so much. I'll pray for the Lord to soften the hearts of the members of my ward, so they'll turn their hearts with compassion toward the poor. And now here you are, and I can go to that bishop and tell him that he can pay the tuition of that worthy girl, and take those children to the doctor, and buy the furniture and the books and even the freedom that many of the people in his ward need so badly. Now look what great blessings we can share with the humblest of the Saints. And as for your old car, I know where it must also go.’”

“What a wonderful dream,” said the man.

“But it isn't finished,” said his wife. “In my dream we went to church several weeks later, and as we got out of our modest new car, we saw the wealthiest man in the ward drive into the parking lot. He was driving our old car.

“And in my dream we both became angry that the bishop gave our car, not to the poor, but to this rich old man who had all he needed in the world. We went to the bishop and said, ‘We didn't give you this car so you could share it with the rich!’

“And then the bishop put his arms around our shoulders and said, ‘Oh, my dear brother, my dear sister, I must have made a mistake. I thought you gave that car to the Lord's church, to be used for righteous purposes. I thought that I was the one called to be the judge in Zion, to decide who should be steward over the Lord's property. Instead I see that you still own that car in your hearts. So I'll give you back the title; it wasn't part of your surplus after all.’

“Then we were ashamed, and you said, ‘Bishop, we should have trusted you. Keep the car.’ And I also said to him, 'Bishop, keep the car, and forgive us for meddling.’

“He smiled at us, and said, ‘Let me tell you what you don't know. That rich old man also came to me as you did, and gave me all his surplus to use as the Lord saw fit. He told me that he had even sold his cars, because, being retired, he could take the bus or walk to do everything he needed to do. But I said, “No you can't. You need a car because I need you to bring four elderly widows to church every Sunday.” And he said, “What can I do? I've already sold my cars.” That was when I gave him the title to your old car. He's using it in the service of the Lord.’

“And then we realized that the bishop had fulfilled his stewardship, and we apologized for mistrusting him. And he said, ‘Your problem wasn't that you didn't trust me. Your problem was that you still thought of the car as yours.’

“But I said, ‘No, Bishop. Our problem was that our car still owned us. It still had the power to turn us away from good works. It isn't enough to give our surplus to the bishop. We have to change our hearts so that we no longer covet the things we own. Even what we still have belongs to the Lord. We're stewards; we have no property of our own.’”

Her husband shouted aloud when he heard the end of her dream. “Now I understand the parable of the talents. Now I know the real sin of the unrighteous servant, the one who buried the one talent in the ground. He was treating the money as if it belonged to him, withholding it from anyone else, so that it couldn't be used for anything. But the other servants, knowing that the money didn't belong to them, put it out with moneylenders so that it could be used to build things, to make things. Everyone profited – the servants who shared freely, the moneylenders, and the people who borrowed and then repaid. But the one who clung to his money and let no one else use it – no one benefited, not even him. And his constant fear of losing that money became a burden to him. It was his soul he buried in the ground, his freedom.”

Then both the husband and wife knew that their dreams were wise ones. And from that day forward they ceased to own any thing or to be owned by any thing. Many things were still recorded as their property, after the manner of the world, but whatever they had, they shared freely with any who needed it. Thus they had no fear of being robbed, for they owned nothing. They no longer cared about impressing their wealthy and educated friends, and soon they learned which of their old friends were true, and which of them were false, because the true friends rejoiced with them in their new freedom, while the false friends mocked and despised them.

And then something happened that surprised them most of all. Because they no longer cared about the world's measurement of a person's worth, they began to see other members of the Church in a new light. They began to see past clothing or manners or grammar or education and made new friends among the very people they had once looked down on. They learned that there was far more wisdom and goodness among the humble people of the Church than they had ever found among the wealthy and sophisticated. They had once ridiculed these people because they had “bad taste”; now they understood that “good taste” was completely unrelated to goodness of heart.

A year after their dreams they lived in a more modest home, and their children had learned to live without many luxuries, and most of their old friends spoke of them with the same sort of mournfulness that they used when speaking of the dead. “How they've come down in the world,” said their old friends, their voices full of pity and scorn.

Yet this man and woman, these dreamers, had found true brotherhood and sisterhood, true fellowship with the Saints, because for the first time in their lives they did not allow the world's corrupt values to make a division between them and other Saints. They truly believed that all their possessions belonged to the Lord and, through him, to all God's children; and so they used the money the world gave them to bless others. By the world's standards they had moved downward in social class. By the Lord's standards they had finally become full partakers in the work and the glory of the Lord.

And they were not alone. For many people had received the same dreams, had come to yearn for the same freedom and goodness. And when the chronicler wrote the scriptural account of that time, it ended like this:

Where is Zion? said the Lord, Yea, where is the people ready to receive me at my coming?

47. And the people of the church heard his voice, and repented.

48. They repented of their covetousness, and they brought their surplus to the Lord.

49. Those who had large houses gave them to those who had large families.

50. They were not ashamed to go down and live in small houses among the laborers and the poor.

51. And their children learned to despise the rewards of the world, and instead valued the rewards of the spirit, and so the rising generation was pure in heart, and not corrupted.

52. The bishops of the church were astonished at the great wealth that suddenly poured into their storehouses.

53. And they sent forth the money gathered in America so it could bless Saints all over the world, helping feed and clothe and educate a righteous generation.

54. And when the Saints discovered that all their brothers and sisters had their rightful portions of the wealth of the world, and none were hungry or naked or homeless, none were untrained or uneducated, and none were afraid or ashamed, they asked each other,

55. How did this happen? What made us change?

56. Then they realized that nothing had compelled them to change;

57. The Lord had given them no new commandment;

58. The Spirit of God had only invited them to live more fully the law they already had, and they answered with the righteous yearning of their own hearts.

59. Thus they became an ensign to all nations, for although none of them had wealth as the world measured it, they all had enough.

60. And that is the one thing which the covetous world can never have.

Written by Orson Scott Card

Story Questions

- What was the result of having their hearts set upon the things of the world?
- What was the Lord's response to this?
- How should they have viewed their car and other possessions?
- What was the effect when they viewed them differently?
- How did they view others differently?
- What was the result of many of the Lord's people no longer being covetous?